

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05
CIAE-00 ACDA-10 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 /047 W
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R 231713Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0887
SECDEF
INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BONN

S E C R E T LONDON 03064

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: NATO, OCON, MILI, AWACS, UK
SUBJECT: SECDEF BROWN'S MESSAGE TO SOS MULLEV

REF: A) STATE 39011 B) USNATO 0933 (NOTAL)

1. FACER, PRIVATELY TOLD POL-MIL ATTACHE THAT MULEY AND HIS

SENIOR MOD COLLEAOUES GREATLY APPRECIATE SECDEF'S LETTER
(REFTEL A). CAREFUL THOUGHT WILL BE GIVEN TO A NUMBER
OF POINTS RAISED AND MULLEY IS MULLING OVER A REOLV.#

2. FACER SAID POINTS MADE VIS-A-VIS AWACS IN PARAS 10
AND 11 REFTEL A IN PARTICULAR WILL BE GIVEN VERY CARE-
FUL CONSIDERATION. FACER TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO RE-
EMPHASIZE MULLEY'S CONTINUING PESSIMISM CONCERNING THE
POSITION IN BONN, NOTING THAT A NEW MESSAOE RECEIVED
FROM UK AMBASSADOR IN BONN REINFORCED AGAIN BRITISH
CONVICTION THAT THERE IS NO NEW EVIDENCE OF MOVEMENT IN
THE RIGHT DIRECTION DESPITE SECDEF'S LETTER.

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3. MULLEY REMAINS INSISTENT ON A MEETING OF DEFENSE
MINISTERS WHICH TENTATIVELY IS SCHEDULED FOR 23 MARCH.
WHILE HE COULD NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY OF SOME FURTHER
BRITISH GIVE ON DEFERMENT OF A DECISION ON NIMROD,
FACER SAID HE WOULD BE MISLEADING US IF HE LEFT US
THINKING ANY FURTHER GIVE IS LIKELY. FOR MULLEY TO HOLD
HIS POSITION ON AWACS. MUCH DEPENDS ON THE BREADTH

AND DEPTH OF A NATO CONSENSUS, FACER OBSERVED, AND NOT ON COSMETICS.

4. COMMENT: WE DISCERN FROM A NUMBER OF CONTACTS THAT WHITEHALL FEARS IMPACT IN WASHINGTON ON THE NEW ADMINISTRATION OF A NATO FAILURE TO AGREE ON AWACS COULD BE VERY DAMAGING TO THE BROADER PROSPECTS FOR GREATER FUTURE ALLIANCE COLLABORATION ON ARMAMENTS PROGRAMS. THIS IS A MAJOR REASON WHY BRITISH ARE DETERMINED TO AVOID BLAME FOR FAILURE OF NATO AEW/"TO TAKE OFF" BEING LAID ON LONDON'S DOORSTEP.

5. WE BELIEVE A NUMBER OF VERY SENIOR MOD OFFICIALS ARE GENUINELY WORRIED THAT NIMROD IS NOT THE BEST WAY TO DEPLOY BRITISH DEFENSE ASSETS. HOWEVER, THERE ARE ENOUGH POWERFUL POLITICAL, INDUSTRIAL, TRADE UNION AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS FLOATING AROUND TO MAKE IT MOST DIFFICULT, PERHAPS EVEN IMPOSSIBLE, FOR MULLEY TO AVOID GOING NIMROD SHOULD NATO FAIL TO GET BRITS OFF THIS HOOK IN MARCH.

ARMSTRONG

NOTE BY OC/T: # AS RECEIVED.

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NNN

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